

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Categorical Exclusion  
DOI-BLM-CO-SO50-2016-0005 CX**

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**November 2016**

**Uncompahgre Riverway Trail Maintenance**

*Location: Ridgway Area along the Uncompahgre River*

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**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Uncompahgre Field Office  
2465 South Townsend Avenue  
Montrose, CO 81401  
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## **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0005 CX

PROJECT NAME: Uncompahgre Riverway Trail Maintenance

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T 45 N, R 8 W, Sec. 9

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office

BACKGROUND:

Efforts to build the Uncompahgre RiverWay Trail, which now connects Ridgway Town Park with Ridgway State Park, began in 1989. The original “rails to trails” idea to convert the old abandoned Denver and Rio Western railroad grade to a trail and greenbelt along the river was initially intended to extend the existing trail from Montrose to the south toward Ridgway.

The original concept was presented to the Montrose Chamber of Commerce “Blue Ribbon Committee on Recreation and Tourism” in 1989. The Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., a non-profit organization, was established to champion the idea. The mission of Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. was to connect Montrose’s existing trail along the Uncompahgre River and abandoned railroad grade to Ridgway State Park, which was just coming on-line with its state-of-the-art recreation facilities at the reservoir.

However, the proposal was met with little enthusiasm and enough resistance in Montrose that the group decided to change tactics and work from Ridgway, north to Ridgway State Park. The Town of Ridgway was very enthusiastic about the prospect of the trail and greenbelt and the group members were very encouraged by the cooperative attitude of private landowners adjacent to the proposed trail.

In 1994, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. implemented the first of two Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) enhancement awards, as well as a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Grant, a grant from the National Park Service Rivers, and construction assistance from the AmeriCorps program.

The RiverWay trail was constructed from Ridgway Town Park to a 20-acre parcel of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) north of Ridgway. A year later, in 1995, the BLM and a partnership consisting of the Town of Ridgway, Ouray County,

Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC), and numerous other donors and volunteers, worked together to construct the walk-in park and "watchable wildlife" area, located approximately one mile north of town. Additional funding through ISTEA and GOCO allowed for completion of the trail connection to Ridgway State Park in 2000.

In the past, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. negotiated six separate easements with private land owners along the trail and raised approximately \$700,000 in actual-construction grant dollars for the project. All planning, negotiations, design, oversight, and maintenance required for the project was undertaken by Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. Currently, the Town of Ridgway, BLM, Ouray County, and Delta Correction Center, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., and various volunteers are working cooperatively to monitor and maintain the RiverWay Trail.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is to place boulders with heavy equipment such as a backhoe on the bank of the Uncompahgre River to protect the east bank from eroding and washing out the Uncompahgre Riverway Trail. The length of the bank to be protected is approximately 50 feet. Rocks will be placed beginning below the water surface and built in a stacked manner extending up the bank approximately 10 feet in height to exceed the ordinary high water mark. Less than 1 cubic yard of material will be placed below the ordinary high water mark per running foot along the bank.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5):

Name of Plan: Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 1989

Decision Language: Management Units 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 16 will be managed for extensive recreational use to meet public demands for dispersed recreation.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, Number I.1, which allows "Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition as a result of the event."

None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion	YES	NO
1. Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.	_____	<u>  X  </u>
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands, floodplains; national monuments;		

- migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.          X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.          X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.          X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.          X
6. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.          X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places.          X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.          X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.          X
10. Have disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.          X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.          X
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.          X

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
Melissa Siders	Wildlife Biologist	TES Species, Migratory Birds, Wildlife
Glade Hadden	Archeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Religious Concerns

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The action affects lands that are situated entirely within previously disturbed ground, and is exempt from additional inventory requirements under the Colorado BLM/SHPO protocol agreement of 2015.

Native American Religious Concerns: There are none known or anticipated for this project.

**Threatened and Endangered Species:**

*Bald eagle crucial winter range*—To protect wintering bald eagles and crucial habitats, no surface disturbing activities shall occur from December 1 through April 30.

*Western yellow-billed cuckoo (Threatened) and other Migratory Birds*—To minimize impacts on breeding migratory birds, surface disturbing activities shall not occur from May 15 through July 15. This timeframe encompasses the core breeding period for the majority of migratory birds in the project area.

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**Decision Record**

**(DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0005 CX)**

PROJECT NAME: Uncompahgre Riverway Trail Maintenance

DECISION: It is my decision to place boulders with heavy equipment such as a backhoe on the bank of the Uncompahgre River to protect the east bank from eroding and washing out the Uncompahgre Riverway Trail.

RATIONALE:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, I.1. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

COMPLIANCE WITH MAJOR LAWS and CONFORMANCE WITH LAND USE PLAN:

The decision is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policy, including the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the Uncompahgre Basin RMP.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The BLM informed the public about this project by listing it on the online Uncompahgre NEPA Register and a copy of the completed Categorical Exclusion will be posted on the NEPA website.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES:

If you are adversely affected by this decision, within 30 days of receipt of this decision you have the right of appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR §4.400.

NAME OF PREPARER: Julie Jackson

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Jedd Sondergard

DATE 11/9/15

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Sara Dawson

Sara Dawson  
Acting Field Manager  
Uncompahgre Field Office

DATE SIGNED 11/12/15

ATTACHMENTS: *Map*

# Uncompahgre Riverway Trail



Bureau of Land Management



Private

Map produced by Bureau of Land Management,  
Uncompahgre Field Office, October 2015  
Projection: UTM, Zone 13; Datum: NAD 1983

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